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20 Mass Ave., N.W., Rm. A3042
Washington, DC 20529



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

DA APR 25 2005

FILE: WAC 02 183 51863 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date:

IN RE: Petitioner:
Beneficiary:

PETITION: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the
Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The director of the service center denied the nonimmigrant visa petition and the matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed. The petition will be denied.

The petitioner provides music service. It seeks to employ the beneficiary as a teacher. The petitioner, therefore, endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

The director denied the petition because the beneficiary is not qualified to perform the proffered position. On appeal, counsel states that the beneficiary is qualified for the proffered position and furnishes previously submitted evidence.

Section 214(i)(2) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(i)(2), states that an alien applying for classification as an H-1B nonimmigrant worker must possess full state licensure to practice in the occupation, if such licensure is required to practice in the occupation, and completion of the degree in the specialty that the occupation requires. If the alien does not possess the required degree, the petitioner must demonstrate that the alien has experience in the specialty equivalent to the completion of such degree, and recognition of expertise in the specialty through progressively responsible positions relating to the specialty.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C), to qualify to perform services in a specialty occupation, an alien must meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) Hold a United States baccalaureate or higher degree required by the specialty occupation from an accredited college or university;
- (2) Hold a foreign degree determined to be equivalent to a United States baccalaureate or higher degree required by the specialty occupation from an accredited college or university;
- (3) Hold an unrestricted state license, registration or certification which authorizes him or her to fully practice the specialty occupation and be immediately engaged in that specialty in the state of intended employment; or
- (4) Have education, specialized training, and/or progressively responsible experience that is equivalent to completion of a United States baccalaureate or higher degree in the specialty occupation, and have recognition of expertise in the specialty through progressively responsible positions directly related to the specialty.

The record of proceeding before the AAO contains, in part: (1) Form I-129 and supporting documentation; (2) the director's request for additional evidence; (3) the petitioner's response to the director's request; (4) the director's denial letter; and (5) Form I-290B. The AAO reviewed the record in its entirety before issuing its decision.

The petitioner is seeking the beneficiary's services as a teacher. The Foundation for Educational Services (FIS) found that the beneficiary possesses the educational equivalent to a bachelor's degree in education from an accredited college or university in the United States.

The director determined that the beneficiary is not qualified for the proffered position because the beneficiary's education, experience, and training are not equivalent to a baccalaureate degree in education. Counsel contends that the beneficiary is qualified for the proffered position based on her education, training, and work experience.

Upon review of the record, the petitioner has failed to establish that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of the proffered position.

The beneficiary does not hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited U.S. college or university in any field of study, and the FIS credentials evaluation indicates that the beneficiary completed an associate of arts in liberal arts. Therefore, the petitioner must demonstrate that the beneficiary meets the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(C)(4).

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D), equating the beneficiary's credentials to a United States baccalaureate or higher degree shall be determined by one or more of the following:

- (1) An evaluation from an official who has authority to grant college-level credit for training and/or experience in the specialty at an accredited college or university which has a program for granting such credit based on an individual's training and/or work experience;
- (2) The results of recognized college-level equivalency examinations or special credit programs, such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI);
- (3) An evaluation of education by a reliable credentials evaluation service which specializes in evaluating foreign educational credentials; or
- (4) Evidence of certification or registration from a nationally-recognized professional association or society for the specialty that is known to grant certification or registration to persons in the occupational specialty who have achieved a certain level of competence in the specialty;
- (5) A determination by the Service that the equivalent of the degree required by the specialty occupation has been acquired through a combination of education, specialized training, and/or work experience in areas related to the specialty and that the alien has achieved recognition of expertise in the specialty occupation as a result of such training and experience.

The FIS evaluator concluded that the beneficiary possesses the equivalent of a bachelor of arts degree in education from an accredited U.S. college or university. However, the evaluation is based upon the beneficiary's education, training, and work experience. A credentials evaluation service may not evaluate an alien's work experience or training; it can only evaluate educational credentials. See 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(3). Thus, to the extent it evaluates the beneficiary's work experience, the evaluation carries no weight in these proceedings. *Matter of Sea, Inc.*, 19 I&N Dec. 817 (Comm. 1988). The AAO will accept that portion of the evaluation analyzing the equivalency of the beneficiary's associate of arts degree.

The AAO will now consider the beneficiary's qualifications under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(5). When CIS determines an alien's qualifications pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(D)(5), three years of specialized training and/or work experience must be demonstrated for each year of college-level training the alien lacks. It must be clearly demonstrated that the alien's training and/or work experience included the theoretical and practical application of specialized knowledge required by the specialty occupation; that the alien's experience was gained while working with peers, supervisors, or subordinates who have a degree or its equivalent in the specialty occupation; and that the alien has recognition of expertise in the specialty evidenced by at least one type of documentation such as:

- (i) Recognition of expertise in the specialty occupation by at least two recognized authorities in the same specialty occupation¹;
- (ii) Membership in a recognized foreign or United States association or society in the specialty occupation;
- (iii) Published material by or about the alien in professional publications, trade journals, books, or major newspapers;
- (iv) Licensure or registration to practice the specialty occupation in a foreign country; or
- (v) Achievements which a recognized authority has determined to be significant contributions to the field of the specialty occupation.

The record contains two music certificates from Yamaha Music School that indicate that the beneficiary passed an examination for grade 4 and 5 playing ability. Although the certificates are translated from the Japanese language into the English language, the AAO observes that the record does not contain a signed affidavit certifying the accuracy of the translation. The other deficiency with the certificates is that no evidence explains the significance of passing the examinations such as the duration of study required to pass the examinations and whether the studies were baccalaureate-level.

¹ *Recognized authority* means a person or organization with expertise in a particular field, special skills or knowledge in that field, and the expertise to render the type of opinion requested. A recognized authority's opinion must state: (1) the writer's qualifications as an expert; (2) the writer's experience giving such opinions, citing specific instances where past opinions have been accepted as authoritative and by whom; (3) how the conclusions were reached; and (4) the basis for the conclusions supported by copies or citations of any research material used. 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(ii).

The AAO now turns to the beneficiary's prior work experience, and whether it included the theoretical and practical application of specialized knowledge required by the specialty. The letter from Mr. [REDACTED] states that the beneficiary was a tenant in his house; that she gave music lessons while living there; and that she also worked for a travel and tourism business. Mr. [REDACTED] does not describe how often the beneficiary gave music lessons or what they entailed. As such, there is no evidence that the beneficiary's past work experience included the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, which in this case is teaching music. Furthermore, Mr. [REDACTED] does not state that the beneficiary worked with peers, supervisors, or subordinates who have a degree or its equivalent in the specialty occupation. Finally, there is no evidence that the beneficiary has recognition of expertise. The evaluator from FIS cannot be considered a "recognized authority" because the evaluator did not provide his qualifications as an expert; no resume or other evidence was attached to the evaluation.

As related in the discussion above, the petitioner has failed to establish that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of the proffered position. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial of the petition.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not sustained that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. The petition is denied.